

VZCZCXYZ0018
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0792 1810913
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 300913Z JUN 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1871
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9271
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0705

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000792

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. BEEF, IRAN

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused June 30 news coverage on the Executive Yuan's approval Monday of the merger of Tainan City and Tainan County into one special municipality; on Taiwan-born New York Yankees pitcher Wang Chien-ming's first victory of the season Sunday; on the legal cases involving former President Chen Shui-bian and his family; and on the entrance examination for Taiwan's senior high schools.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" discussed the safety of U.S. beef. The article said that even though the American people have concerns about mad cow disease in U.S. beef, it has never occurred to Taiwan's Department of Health to warn the Taiwan people not to let their children consume beef from the affected areas. With regard to Iran, an op-ed in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the people's revolution in Iran and said the United States' "hands off" attitude toward the revolution does more good than bad in general. End summary.

¶3. U.S. Beef

"Is It Safe for Small Children to Eat U.S. Beef?"

Liu Pei-po, former director-general of the Animal Health Research Institute, opined in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] (6/30):

"... Previous documents showed that in areas infected with mad cow disease, there were quite a few cases where children consumed beef and contracted this disease, but the symptoms did not show until they were grown-ups. A question for [Department of Health (DOH)] Minister Yeh Ching-chuan: How high are the chances for children in Taiwan who eat U.S. beef to contract mad cow disease? Have you done any scientific simulation analysis [on this]?

"It is fine to draw an analogy for the gourmets that the risk of contracting mad cow disease through eating U.S. beef is equivalent to being hit by lightning twice [in a row]. But this is not scientific data, and logically, there is analogical error [in such a statement]. Judging from a professional prospective, people should not buy or eat any food that triggers safety concerns. In areas which are free from mad cow disease, any discussion concerning the chances of contracting this disease would involve political, economic or trade intervention! As a matter of fact, DOH is clearly aware that the United States is an area where mad cow disease is known to occur, and still it wants to open [Taiwan's market] and allow the Taiwan people to consume [U.S. beef]. It is akin to telling a person to stand in an open field and use his cell phones on a day when lightning is striking. Do you think that person will be hit by lightning? Is there no doubt at all that people will contract the mad cow disease? ...

"The head of the DOH probably does not know that in Texas, cafeterias in many elementary schools do not provide food containing any beef, and that the elementary schools will be sued if they randomly allow their students to eat beef! Even the American people

have concerns about mad cow disease when it comes to [eating] U.S. beef. It is a pity that it has never occurred to DOH to call on the Taiwan people not to allow their children to consume beef coming from the diseased areas."

¶4. Iran

"Iran's New People's Revolution"

Taiwan's former Ambassador to South Africa Loh I-cheng wrote in his column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 130,000] (6/29):

"... Normally, the United States is Iran's biggest enemy and it should immediately reach out to help the intellectuals in Iran who stood aforo and challenged the authority of their government. Barack Obama, on the other hand, dealt with this situation in a low-profile manner. This is because Washington is clearly aware that it has to keep itself away from such a revolution initiated on the [Iranian] people's own initiative, so that the Iranian government will not accuse Washington of being the invisible hand behind the revolution. Even though a few people in the Republican camp made high-flown remarks, in general, the United States' 'hands-off' attitude' does more good than bad. ..."

YOUNG